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ABSTRACT

Living in America today are many hundreds of thousands of people whose lives are characterized by continual movement each crop season from town to town, from state to state, and from region to region. There are 3 large-scale pathways (streams) the migrants follow: (1) along the Pacific Coast, from southern California to Washington; (2) from the south-central region of Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma and terminating in states like Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin; and (3) along the Atlantic Seaboard, from Florida to New England. The migrant labor forces are made up of Mexicans, Negroes, and Whites living under conditions characterized by poor housing, bad sanitation, poor diets, and inadequate medical care. In a very real sense the migrant farmers form a "subculture," living apart from the rest of the nation in many ways. They not only live apart, but they feel the implications of their behavior. The author states that, on the basis of his observations, it is this isolation that specially characterizes migrant farm life. (EJ)

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the migrant farmer

A Psychiatric Study

By Robert Coles, M.D.

Southern Regional Council
5 Forsyth Street, N.W.
Atlanta 3, Georgia

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FOREWORD

Americans are a mobile people, but the persons of whom Dr. Coles writes are different. The whole family moves, except for infants the whole family works, they move almost constantly, they are poor. Even in the fact that they work the soil they are different from a steadily increasing majority of their fellow-citizens.

Are they citizens in any but the most minimal degree? Dr. Coles does not directly answer this question, though what he does say makes the answer obvious. What he does ably do is to show us the human wants and strengths which these people have. The economic hardships of the migrant farmers are traceable to their displacement from old farms by new machines. They are castoffs of the southern agricultural revolution, and yet their labor continues to feed us. We have not done as well at feeding them, their minds and their bodies.

Dr. Coles is a psychiatrist, now with the University Health Services of Harvard University. From 1961-1963 he was engaged in research for the Southern Regional Council, for which he is still a consultant. His work in numerous periodicals attracts wide respect. We are happy again to publish his findings and uniquely interesting insights.

Leslie W. Dunbar
Executive Director

CHAPTER I

THE MIGRANT LIFE

Living in America today are many hundreds of thousands of people whose lives are characterized by continual movement each crop season from town to town, state to state, and region to region. They are people whose hands harvest the fruit and vegetables we eat.

There are three large-scale pathways they follow (called "streams" by the farmers, public health doctors, or government officials who are involved in one way or another with their lives). One is along the Pacific Coast, drawing upon native white and Negro workers, or Mexican workers, and moving from southern California up along to Washington and back as the harvesting season itself moves northward, then southward. There is a middle stream—heavily Mexican, but with a good number of whites and Negroes—which starts in the south-central region of Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma and moves northward in a wide area, terminating in states like Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The third stream is the Atlantic Seaboard one. It is made up mainly of Negroes, but has some whites too. Starting in Florida in late May and June its workers move steadily northward, up through Georgia, settling into the Carolinas and Virginia for some weeks, then into Delaware, New Jersey, and New York, a few going on into New England. They stay north for the rest of the Summer and early Fall. Then by the thousands they return to Florida for a Winter and Spring of gathering crops there, sometimes in one general area (from farm to farm) or sometimes moving from county to county.

In a very real sense the migrant farmers form a "subculture" in this nation. They live apart from the rest of us in a number of ways. By definition they are on the move, regularly or irregularly living each year in several states and in the process managing usually to lose the many advantages of a permanent residence in any one of them. For example, migrants usually do not vote. They are rarely eligible for any local unemployment assistance. They may hardly see the towns whose nearby fields they harvest. Their rights to adequate schooling for their children, to police protection, to sanitary inspection and regulation of their homes, to enforcement of fire regulations for those same homes, are in many cases prejudiced.

They come and they soon leave. They not only do this but they know they do, and they *feel* the implications of their behavior, the facts of their arrival, work, and departure in isolation from the life of the various communities whose

fields they infiltrate and work. Whether they travel in caravans of trucks and buses, as many do, or by their own cars, they ignore most of the roadside stopping places as they move along from state to state. They have their own places to eat and sleep, to stop and obtain service for themselves and their cars; there are a few stations, or there are simply fields along the highways. Migrants know their "place," they know the houses to seek out when they arrive in a county, the stores which are theirs, offering their kind of food for their kind of cooking, and if you haven't lived in their homes and tasted the food, seen it being prepared and eaten, it is hard with words alone to do justice to the grease and starch, the common lack of utensils, the consequent vitamin deficiencies suffered by people whose diet ignores food picked by their very hands and rich as is possible in vitamins.

Most of the activities which Americans of different classes and regions call upon for their leisure time are not typically chosen by migrants. They usually have no neighborhood churches or movie houses. They join no social clubs and take no countryside trips or picnics. Their children do not go to scout meetings nor do they launch charity drives or attend book club meetings. Family visits are a matter of seeing the part of the family also on the road and hoping someday for a word or a few days with the rest of the family far away. Phones are not customary, and mail is rare indeed. There may be church services brought to them by ministers themselves migrant in order to reach them. There may be "platter parties," records played in a cabin to hard dancing and soft and hard drink. Television is not rare, bringing all of America into the lives of those who look at it, and, because watched by neighbors, a kind of rallying instrument. More accurately, television sets come and go, purchased by some for small down payments, often quickly taken away when payments are not forthcoming.

And so there is no comparing the unstable, disorganized social life of migrants with that of the large majority of Americans. They are separated from us by their hand-to-mouth existence, their migratory habits which deprive them from intimacy with any solid residential condition, and, in the case of the majority of them, Negroes or Puerto Ricans or Mexicans, by their racial handicaps in our country.

The history of migratory farm labor goes back well into the Nineteenth Century when roving bands of men moved about reaping and bundling our wheat crops. However, much of American agriculture slowly became heavily mechanized, so that by the 1920's there was a serious crisis developing in

the lives of millions of farm workers whose labor was simply no longer needed. To the cities many of them went, even from the South, whose farms and cotton plantations yielded more slowly to machines than the giant wheat and corn fields of the Midwest. Many, however, stayed on the land, eking out what existence they could.

With the onset of the depression years of the 1930's, dispossessed sharecroppers, or small farmers whose income was near nothing because of the depression, or additional thousands driven from their dried, choked land by a series of droughts, combined to offer a frightful spectacle to their countrymen as they moved, by new thousands, hungry, fearful, and confused across the continent in search of a decent chance of work.

While many of these people also moved into the city, many others remained loyal to their competence in farming by taking jobs as fruit pickers and vegetable harvesters in the expanding farms dedicated to those crops in California, in the Midwest, and in Florida. With rapid transportation by train and truck and refined methods of refrigerating these once perishable commodities, there had developed in the period after the First World War a large-scale industry of growing fruit and vegetable produce, once, of course, grown locally by farmers near the cities they supplied. As these new farms, and the packing houses attached to them, came into being they required workers to plant and gather their crops, then pack them and load them on waiting box cars and trucks. The farms themselves were scattered over great distances, and, in keeping with the changing seasons, over entire regions of the nation. To work on them, men and their families have to be willing to move regularly and sometimes frequently too.

These people do not have comfortable lives, in comparison with the way most of us live. In large measure they live in houses whose adequacy, let alone comfort, leave much to be desired. Often they are flimsy, rat infested, one-room hovels with improper sanitation. In them live large families, sleeping at close quarters on cots or on the floors, often eating without utensils on the same floor. If some of these people live more comfortable lives, many live under conditions which an essay like this cannot hope to describe fairly. What most migrants share is the more than occasional exposure to poor housing, bad sanitation, a diet poor in vitamins and protein, inadequate medical care, continual movement—and consequent lack of firm association with any particular community—, very limited incomes, and a lack of eligibility for a number of

privileges many of us either take for granted or consider "rights": the vote, a telephone, a library card, unemployment or welfare benefits, minimum wage protection.

In the southern states alone there are an estimated quarter of a million migrant workers, according to figures issued in 1965 by the U.S. Department of Labor. In general, what is happening in the South, and elsewhere, is that the number of farms is dropping (by 18% from 1959 to 1965) while the actual land tilled holds the same or drops only slightly. The average farm thus tends to be larger, usually a matter of large farms absorbing small ones.

As with farms, the number of sharecroppers has been slowly falling. For example, in the 1950's the sharecropping system of cotton farming in Mississippi gradually gave way to mechanized production and reduced cotton acreage. The number of tenant farmers dropped from more to more between 1954 and 1959, while the number of regular farm workers (no longer sharecroppers) rose from 24,000 to 39,000. In fact, the total number of sharecroppers in the 16 southern states dropped by more than half in that time, leaving 121,000 sharecropper farms, according to the National Sharecroppers Fund.

Such political, economic, social, and cultural facts affect the lives of these people, influencing the way they act, their view of themselves in relationship to others around them, the assumptions they make about the world. Such facts also become psychological forces as they bear down and help shape the thinking of children, the behavior of parents, the experiences of both. In many respects these "environmental" forces determine the way migrants touch and feed their children, toilet-train them, bring them up to get along with one another and themselves as they grow and develop. These "external" facts become translated into internal ones, of fantasy, dream, action, and personality development.

Psychiatric research must, therefore, make proper mention of its necessary and affirming kinship to sociological and anthropological observation as well as historical knowledge. It is not simply a matter of seeing the impact of a social system on people. It is one of seeing how, out of historical events in a given political and economic system, a social system has developed, with its own culture and frame of mind. Migrants have a "sub-culture" within that of the poor, including their own non-migrant relatives.

In broad and over-simplified categories, these small, marginal southern farmers of yesteryear have done one of several things. Many, and those who are the subject of this short

study, have adopted a migrant life, while continuing their occupation as workers of the soil. These people in their own way are showing as much determination and self-reliance as those others who have stayed at "home," and continue to struggle for economic survival, or those many others who have left the land and braved an alien city life but, with few marketable skills, have frequently and widely become public wards, living on relief. On the other hand, some of these rural dispossessed have made the transition to self-sustaining city life. Quite often, I found that these successful ones had been those with military service from which they had learned to do things that cities want done.

Here are the words on tape of a Negro man whose six year old daughter pioneered school desegregation in Louisiana:

> We just couldn't stay on the farm no longer. My daddy's still there, but there wasn't room for us, so we had to leave or we would have been taking our mother's food and bringing nothing in . . . I mean you can grow some food, but not enough to keep you fed all year, and there's no money for anything else . . . So we left one by one . . . I went to New Orleans because I'd learned how to be an auto mechanic in the service. So I figured I could always get me a job there . . . My brother didn't have nothing he could do but farm and he figured he could go to Florida and get a living from that . . . We had some cousins do that a few years back, so he knew to go to them.

A white man is now telling his story. A deeply convinced segregationist brought up in Mississippi, he had withdrawn his child from school when the Negro man just quoted sent his child there, yet they grew up only 30 miles apart:

> . . . It was the army that did it . . . I mean getting my trade . . . my electrician's training gave me the push to come here . . . One of my brothers is still home with my folks and there ain't much they're getting out of the farm to keep them but barely alive; and another's in Mobile and he ain't doing much of anything so far as we can hear. I think he works on the docks there when he can; but he's got no skill is the trouble . . . and we have a brother in Florida who works on farms there. He stays there most of the year, and they leave in the summer and do some picking North, and then they come back. It's better than no work at all . . . No, I think they'd rather be right where we are, to tell the truth. They came here before we did . . . yes, he's older than me . . . so he didn't get a job and he didn't get a job, and then he either had to stay on relief or leave, so they just packed up and went back to the farm (their father's small farm in Mississippi) and then I guess he had to leave that too, like we all do . . . so that's how he come upon Florida.

What emerges from these family histories is a small confirmation of what we all know about the serious troubles of millions of southern tenant farmers, black and white, and how these troubles cause emigration, and how the destination chosen can be influenced by educational experience (the

armed services were unwittingly serving as "vocational rehabilitation" centers for both of these men), and, finally, how the difficulties of poor people lead to frustrations and animosities easily channelled, given any social and political encouragement, into racial antagonisms.

CHAPTER II

NATURE OF THIS STUDY

My interest in these people was aroused in the course of a study of the adjustment of Negro and white school children to school desegregation in the South. Several of the Negro children and one white child had been born in sharecropper cabins in Mississippi, Alabama, or South Carolina. Their early years had been spent on farms, and their parents had only recently moved into New Orleans or Atlanta, where they came upon the crisis of a serious social struggle that affected them and the education of their children. In the course of taking family histories I learned that in five families (four Negro and one white) there were uncles, aunts, and cousins who had left those same fixed, if no longer sustaining, farms to join the migrant labor force rather than the tide going steadily, toward cities of the North or the South.

What made for such different choices, and what happened as a result of them to such differently lived lives? Through one Negro family in New Orleans I established preliminary contact with their relatives and other Negro families who harvest winter crops in Florida and move up the Atlantic states in Summer and Autumn doing likewise. I was unable to trace down the migrant relatives of the white family, but in the attempt met with other white migrant families in Florida and established effective communication with them. In preliminary visits I interviewed at length public health doctors and nurses who have long been concerned with the severe medical problems which afflict the bodies of these people, and the related sanitary problems which rise from their living and working conditions (contaminated drinking water, inadequate drainage and sewage facilities).

I worked as a general physician in the mobile public health clinics which attempt to reach migrants (known to be suspicious and isolated) by seeking them out directly; accompanied nurses on their post-natal rounds; did likewise with dieticians whose job it is, often against stubborn emotional resistance, to try to educate people whose diet is woefully unhealthy about ways of improving health through modification of food habits. (The irony of people surrounded by fresh fruit and vegetables, yet shunning them for themselves and their children in the face of medical advice to the contrary, was one of the first reminders encountered that more than simply "material deprivation" was at work in these families.)

I also talked at considerable length with the farmers who enploy, and often provide living quarters for, migrants and

have had considerable experience and difficulty with them and their habits of living. I spent a good deal of time talking with county agricultural agents in Florida and some northern states, learning the history of agriculture (and hence migrations of people to support it) in the various counties and states; talked with some school teachers who must try to educate migrant children, and visited schools where they are taught; talked also with certain social workers who come into contact with these people, and with those from church groups who have come to know and try to help these people while others of us have scarcely heard of them and their kind of existence.

Eventually I selected ten families for more intensive study. Six were Negro and four white, all part of the eastern Seaboard migration. I interviewed these mothers, fathers, and children over a period of two years, some months visiting them weekly at home. On later occasions I followed them in their migration northward, traveling in buses and trucks with them or in two instances in family cars. I lived with two Negro families and one white family for two weeks each. I tape-recorded our interviews and with young children both played games and placed heavy emphasis on drawing and painting pictures. I photographed homes and their interiors, fields and the way bodies and hands must posture themselves in them to harvest their crops, and buses and trucks with their dense "loads," so that I might document such conditions of existence and study their meaning to the people who live under them, work under them, and move about under them.

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

My primary interest has been with the relationship between the migrant and the "outside world" and the growth and development of the migrant child's mind. Migrant farmers live a kind of life that asserts itself upon their infants and children, and emerges once again in adults able to live with its demands. The extreme poverty, the cultural deprivation and social fragmentation, in sum the uprootedness which characterizes their lives, falls not suddenly upon them (as it does upon the observer who tries to comprehend their manner of survival) but is a constant fact of life from birth to death, summoning therefore a whole style of life, a full range of adaptive maneuvers. Perhaps if we take a migrant child at birth and follow his life along we shall best combine the telling of their lives with the psychodynamic developments in them.

Infancy

In only two of the ten families were the children delivered by doctors. The rest of the mothers relied upon midwives or simply relatives and friends. Frequently a pregnant mother returns "home" (where relatives—parents, brothers and sisters, even cousins—maintain a permanent residence) to deliver a baby. In many instances such is not possible, and children are delivered wherever the mother happens to be, often enough "on the road," that is, in the course of traveling for working purposes. One is struck by the casual attitude toward childbirth displayed by these mothers, and their common knowledge of how to deliver children, remove the placenta, tie and sever the cord.

Many of them are quite afraid to deliver their babies in a hospital, fearful that the child in some way will be "hurt." For example, one of our mothers remarked that, "They say it's cleaner there and safer, but I tried it once and I got scared to death and my baby didn't behave good. He cried more and didn't take my milk so easy." While many also complain that they simply have not sufficient money to pay for good medical and obstetrical care, it seems clear that even were such facilities free to them, their substantial fear, suspicions, and superstitions would have to be overcome—and perhaps some accommodation on the part of the doctors and hospitals be made in keeping with the migrants' cultural attitudes toward child-bearing and rearing.

Migrants seem much less self-conscious about pregnancy and childbirth than do not only middle-class families but

many of the urban poor, both Negro and white. During the pre-natal period the mothers constantly refer to their pregnancy even well before it is obvious. Other children are told about the fact as soon as menstruation stops. One mother told her four children, "We is getting a baby again, 'cause I don't bleed no more." As her abdominal wall swelled in later months the children would often come up to touch and fondle it, even to talk to the baby inside. There was similar behavior in the other families. Moreover, likely as not, the mother would wear little or no clothing in the early morning and evening hours. The mothers frequently wear heavy clothes during their work in the fields, pants, rubber boots, and rubber guards on their knees to protect them during stoop labor, and are sometimes relieved to be rid of all clothing at home. Thus, the unborn child is publicly seen, felt and followed along as he grows in the womb.

Many Negro migrant women—I did not notice this in whites—at this time become more religious, going with special frequency to the various churches that flourish among them. Names such as "The One and Only Church of God" or "God's True House of Faith" describe the more evangelical and customarily passionate among them. In addition, more conventional denominations send ministries to migrants, and these ministries come perhaps into closer and more directly helpful contact with them than does any other segment of "our" population with the exception of certain public health service doctors, nurses, social workers, and dieticians.

The increase in church attendance was attributed by several mothers to a desire to insure a baby who would survive pregnancy, be born without complication, *and live*. The loss of children due to miscarriages, the mishaps of difficult deliveries, or the various untreated diseases of the first days and weeks of infancy are very much on the minds of these women.

Likely as not the child is born at home, in the presence of his brothers and sisters, or, if a first child, his "father." (Many Negro migrants do not formally marry, or may do so after several children have been born.) Of course, there may be several "fathers" to a given family of children, though the current husband is almost always called "father" by all children, and his name is assumed. Since residence and schools alike constantly shift, this is an easier practice to follow than in the cities or rural areas where some of these same customs hold for non-migrants, but with less formal cooperation from the society. White migrant families are much more likely to have a common father.

From the first day of birth the new child eats and sleeps

with the rest of the family. Migrants quite often live in "one-room" houses, small shacks which are built to cover people with a roof rather than help them divide their activities and time with one another in certain ways. The children are breast-fed, and so fed for a year or more without any other food, except perhaps soft drinks which are introduced in the first months. There is little of the modesty one sees in our predominant culture, and again even in the poorer sections of it. Children of five and six may fondle both baby and breast during the feeding period. There is no concept of a schedule of feeding. Infants are often brought to work, watched over by their brothers and sisters, or grandmothers; their mother is summoned when the child cries, there to be fed with little interest in covering the breast from anyone nearby.

The infant sleeps with his mother for the first few months, then is entrusted to the considerably older children, if there are any, rather than any siblings one or two years older. In such cases girls of five and six become quite occupied with introducing food to the child, playing with him, clothing him. If there are only very young children the infant still will likely go to the oldest of these, almost as a gift or birthright. There are families within families, younger children "belonging" to various older ones.

The young child sleeps with the other children, if he is a first or even second child he or she may sleep with his or her parents until enough children come to warrant a second bed, or cot, or sleeping bag. The infant thus grows and becomes a child in the midst of the constant physical presence of others, their noises, smells, actions, and habits. He is constantly touched, held and seen by them and thus receives that sensory, especially tactile, stimulation; or we might say, metaphorically and literally both, that kind of nourishment.

The growing child of one or two responds to such an environment by talking and moving about with ease. He is often naked, allowed to be so and encouraged to be so. Since his parents follow the sun in pursuit of work made possible by the sun, he is usually quite comfortable without clothes. He is not toilet trained until he is well able to walk outside his house, usually in the second year though sometimes well into the third year. The outside world is often his toilet, the nearby land of trees, thickets, and grass. Many of these children have never been in a house that has a bathroom, never seen a bathtub or sink. The mothers tend to be fairly firm once they have decided to train the child. They or one of

their other children quickly carry him outside, where he can continue, or, if he is finished, he may be left there a bit alone, told not to come in and prevented from doing so. That is a harsh fate, a cruel exile for childen so constantly close to others. They rapidly seem to get the point. On the whole, then, toilet training seems to be accomplished quickly, without great self-consciousness on the part of anyone, indeed rather smoothly and effectively.

Childhood

The children are allowed great freedom in moving about —their very inheritance—as they leave the infant and baby years to become walking, talking boys and girls. They are extraordinarily responsible for one another. They feed one another, clothe one another, sleep together, and often work together, following their parents at picking in the fields as they become seven, eight, or nine and thus old enough to do so.

Migrants' homes have practically no printed matter. Many migrants are illiterate. They do not read newspapers. They do not even receive mail. Their children fast pick up their parents' words, but they come to school with little preparation for books, maps, or pictures. The walls of their homes are barren. Some of them, however, have seen a good deal of television. On the road they often cannot have TV, because they are in homes unequipped for electricity. In Florida the same may hold, but it may not if they live in certain camps or housing compounds. The first thing purchased is a television set, and the children become utterly taken up with it for a while. After a while the enthusiasm seems to subside and then stop altogether, enough so that the set is ignored for long spells. I wondered how the children—and for that matter their parents—responded to the comfortable world of America as it entered *their* world. I soon learned that they seemed to respond to it as "our" children do to adventure stories, science fiction, or plain comic strip stimulation of dream and fantasy.

For example, one child of six said that he would some day board a rocket to the moon, and on the way "get off to see the cities up there." Questioned earnestly about the existence of cities on the moon, he explained that he meant the cities, and the life in them, he saw on television and passed by, at small but significant distances, in his travels with his parents.

Particularly revealing are the drawings these children do at five and six or eight and ten. When asked to draw pictures

of themselves they consistently sketch their brothers and sisters *with* themselves. When asked to limit themselves to a drawing of themselves, they hesitate, seemingly confused or paralyzed, or use the crayons in helter-skelter fashion that results in no picture at all. They seem very much afraid of being alone, of asserting on paper or in games the kind of individuality rather commonly sought by children from different backgrounds.

For example, a seven year old boy was asked what would happen to a soldier that was isolated from other soldiers in a game. He said the soldier would die of starvation. ("He'd better get back fast or he won't eat and that'll end him.") All such games showed the children anxious to have groups of soldiers close together. There were no isolated leaders, and when I tried to establish their presence the children wanted them back with the others, or feared for their lives. They seemed unable to command their imaginative resources for situations where people were on their own.

The games and drawings also gave us some indication of how these children felt about themselves in relation to non-migrant children. They are, of course, well traveled, though they do not move on the main highways, or the planes and trains the rest of us use. Still, with their parents they see the land and its people, and from their parents they get a series of notions about others. "I tells my children we feeds the rest of the children," one mother told us. Another mother constantly told her children that the alternative to their kind of life was "trouble" or "no food and going to jail." Several parents frequently remarked upon the good fortune of being able to get what work they did as harvesters. The children were reminded that they had cousins whose parents didn't work at all, and "they takes to drinking and fighting all day long."

The children thus sense that they and their parents do something important for others, that those others have a better but distantly unobtainable life, that the alternative to the migrant life is not that better life but one even worse than the one they know—full of danger and pain—and that their present life (whatever its trials) serves to keep them and their families from not only external hardship but internal disintegration.

One child was finally able to formulate (and confide) her impression of the life of city children. She drew a house so large as to cover almost the entire paper, then filled it with furniture. There was only one small window. The furniture seemed so abundant as to be a log jam. I had a sheaf of her

drawings showing her *own* house; it had many windows and walls so drawn as to leave spaces that ranged from crevices to gaping holes. She invariably filled "her" house with six, seven, or nine people, but never any furniture. (She was one of six, her mother was pregnant, and with her father there were eight in the family.) The walls on the city home were scrupulously and thickly crayoned—and in red, instead of brown and black. The girl was telling that she knew that other children lived in more solid, perhaps brick, houses, less exposed and open to the wind or rain, filled with tables, chairs, and beds that she knew she did not have in her own. When asked about the people who lived in the urban home, they slowly took on shape at her hands: parents and two children, all bigger and stockier than her own family. She had to draw them, incidentally, on another piece of paper, there being no room for them on the first piece. The house and furniture had monopolized all the space.

Other children do consistently similar drawings. As they become nine and ten, they can speak their observations more readily. One little white boy of seven emphasized his own kind of living (its rootlessness) by spending considerable time on the kind of foundation (including an elaborate cellar) he gave to the houses he imagined non-migrants to have. A migrant child of nine explained the differences between his family and many others as follows: "We has to keep moving or we don't eat except from relief, if they give it to us. . . . They have the work near their houses, and they has it all the time. . . . They takes the pictures on TV in their homes, because most people can recall them and there aren't but a few of us, so we aren't there on the picture."

As migrant children become four and five they learn their mothers' wishes and develop the controls necessary for their later life. The power of police, traffic lights, and other rules of the road are recited by their parents to them as they move along. Children are physically punished, hard and mean at times, for taking food not theirs, for squabbling with one another, or failing to execute assigned tasks promptly: fetching water from a pump, holding the baby, feeding the dog. (Stray dogs abound in migrant camps, and are not ignored. One public health doctor said, "The dogs may symbolize what they think of themselves, because they sure take care of them and feed them whatever they have to eat.") Older children are trained to follow after their parents, harvesting in the fields. They must learn how to pick tomatoes or pluck beans, and if they become slow or careless they are hit and shouted down. I have noticed that when punished in the

fields they are very often hit by hand on their legs. It is leg work and hand work that makes for harvesters.

By the time, then, a migrant child goes to school he has been taught his do's and don't's, to fear certain others, to get along with people in certain ways. Impulsiveness, self-assertion, rivalrous expressions, and envious feelings tend to be strongly discouraged at home, but allowed of children as groups, that is in conjunction with brothers and sisters. Thus, groups of children can fight other groups, or envy one another openly so long as collectively.

Mothers show great warmth and open affection, kissing and fondling their children, rubbing the skin on their arms, but also show quick anger toward them and severe punishment of them, most often slapping accompanied by shouting. Rarely is one child punished alone, or often the mother will remind the others that they, too, have done similar wrongs in the past, and will in the future. There is an absence of grudges in parents. A punished child will likely as not be embraced seconds or minutes after being punished, almost, sometimes, as *part* of it. The result seems to be a sharply defined sense of limitation or restriction, one that does not spread into general shyness or inhibition.

This may explain what many observers of migrants notice, their capacity to change moods and behavior so rapidly; they can be fearfully, grimly silent (especially before the "strangers" of our world) and then quickly joyful and talkative with one another. "Their moods don't last," a nurse told me. I suspect that their early training sets the stage for what they will later need, a highly developed sense of flexibility in their personality, an ability to manage the constant restrictions of the external world, but still not succumb to the apathy and despair that would fatigue and immobilize them. In a sense, then, there is a "bounce" to the way these children are punished that teaches them fast recovery from a slap as well as specific, responsive obedience to it.

Much of the hardest punishment goes into confirming the child's sense of submission to the non-migrant world, or passivity before it. There is a striking difference in the relationship between the child and his family "at home" or in travel, and the child at school, in the fields, even on the streets. At home the children play together easily and warmly. They are very free with their parents, and their parents with them. Open expression of love and demonstrations of it are seen. In children of eight and nine, when one might expect otherwise, boys talk openly of wishing to marry their mothers, girls of wishing to marry their fathers. There is, later on,

a substantial incidence of step-father-step-daughter sexual liaison, and those between fathers and daughters have been noted by social workers who observe both white and Negro migrants. Two mothers said that such happenings were not rare; but were frowned upon and reported about as the "events" they apparently are: "It goes on sometimes, I think 'on the road' if the mother is getting ready to have a baby, or something like that. . . . I don't think it goes on a lot. No, it shouldn't, but it does sometimes; maybe on account of drink, and you kind of get frustrated."

In point of fact the rigid incest barriers that hold for middle-class families seem less sturdy with these families, often fathered by several men, in constant movement, living and sleeping practically on top of one another despite their invariably large size. Their children are much less secretive, resort to much less furtive and symbolic maneuvers to express their attachment and direct love for their parents, and also their anger. Yet, in contrast to such physical intimacy and propinquity, openness of feeling and of anger, closeness of relationship between children, when migrant children meet many people on the "outside" (as their parents are likely to refer to anyone from a teacher to a farm manager) they often appear isolated, guarded, withdrawn, suspicious, and apathetic or dull.

Thus, in many respects migrant children are brought up to have two rather explicit ways of responding to the two worlds of their family and "others." Though, of course, all children learn a version of that kind of distinction, there is a sharpness of contrast to the two-fold behavior in migrant children that is quite special. It is, at times, uncannily as if they had two sets of attitudes, two personalities, one for their family, one for the rest of the world.

From Childhood Straight into Adulthood

Migrant children become migrant adults with no ceremony, or time to be not quite either, so as to consolidate the one before taking up the other. There are two elements that mark the beginning of adulthood in the migrant, and, when both are fulfilled, he or she is an adult and so treated by parents, brothers and sisters, and neighbors. These are experience in working the fields and the onset of puberty.

By ten, many migrant children have put in considerable time at harvesting whatever crops their parents have worked at. In some southern states, school times used to be adjusted so that children could help with cotton or other crops, and that practice has not yet vanished for many sharecropping

regions. With migrants there is an even greater possibility for school schedules to yield to the needs of work; though the several states may insist that children within their territorial limits attend school, migrants tend to shuffle in and out of towns, counties and states, making it hard indeed for any regulatory agency to keep track of them. Their children may spend most of the Winter and Spring in one Florida school, or they may move about from one school to another, or not attend any school for very long. Dropouts among even the more "stable" migrant population—those who do less moving about—tend to be high in the junior high years.

At ten to twelve the children start becoming adults physiologically; many of them have already been working for several seasons. It is not long before they are marrying and having children. Brides of 14 and 15 are common, and their husbands are likely to be the same age or not very much older.

Before actual marriage the young men and women may live with their families and travel with them, but at 12 to 14 they are "on their own time," as several mothers describe the fact that their sons and daughters were going out at night, and often staying out. They were, too, earning money and keeping it, rather than turning it in to their mothers. I noted that sexual maturation seemed to trigger the social and economic independence of the child with great speed. I wondered about the "defensive" nature of this fast departure, whether the highly crowded living conditions made a sexually aroused young man or woman "too much" for his parents to put up with. The parents said that they felt that migrants tended to "marry earlier" than sharecroppers, and certainly *part* of their explanation is the ease with which older children can often make at least *some* money, and the fact that migrant farmers need their children rather less than do sharecroppers, whose children must help their parents work the land even when married, and often for no money at all.

Young Adulthood

Married and parents, workers and housekeepers, young migrant men and women (at 16 or 18, for example) have their "platter parties" when they can join record machine with a source of electricity. On their way to work at six in the morning they can be seen literally dancing in the streets or pathways, often with a beer or two before they get on the buses which take them to the fields. Often their first child is given to the maternal grandmothers as a kind of "present,"

though slowly the mother accepts responsibility for the baby and, with it, for adulthood itself.

Many of the younger migrants try very hard to break out of the migrant stream, to venture into cities for jobs or at the least buy a car on time, which means they can travel by themselves rather than in the crowded trucks and buses that many of their parents may have to use, tired as those parents may be of depositing money for used cars that soon break hopelessly down. In large numbers they seem headed for disappointment. It is not only their lack of education and the unemployment which afflicts their segment of the economy. They themselves are at once afraid when they approach the city, many of them unaware of just how to obtain work there.

Moreover, many earnest young migrant workers are repelled by the prospect of sitting week after week waiting for jobs that do not in any case seem forthcoming. They are made anxious by the sight of relatives, friends, or simply fellow human beings drawing relief (as migrants they are ineligible for it until they establish residence, which may be easy or very hard, depending upon the state and its criteria for residence). Part of the explanation for their common anxious reluctance to join the ranks of the urban unemployed is perhaps based on fear of the city and its pervasive "authorities," and a developmental reliance upon the movement of travel, and farming done during it, for a sense of their own identity or self-respect.

One migrant (aged 17, two children) told his feelings as follows: "I tried the city for a job, and I moved in with a cousin, and no go. . . . They was all on relief and I was supposed to get on when I could, after applying; but we got tired of waiting, and we just left one day. . . . I'd rather keep 'on the season' and feel right than sit all day as they do and *do nothing.*" There were several psychological themes in this and other interviews with him: his awe and confusion before the complexities of bureaucratic procedure; his fear of the city, its people, will, and customs; his restive inability to accommodate himself to a passive, idle, "taking" posture in contrast with the one he grew up to know, the energetic, kinetic, changeable, and active one of migrants.

Young migrants, like their parents, show few inhibitions over sexuality. They have grown up with it, heard and seen it from their first days. Their parents have never seen fit to restrict their love-making to private or relatively secluded places. (They are generally not to be had anyway.) In the evening hours as the children play noisily with one another,

their parents will have sexual relations. I noticed, however, that many young, childless couples preferred privacy from their parents for such times—not always available while in transit. The woods are then often used.

Finally, I noticed a gradual change in mood or spirit in youthful migrants. At 20, at 22, they are full-fledged adults; we would call them "older" migrants. They have lost much of their interest in the possibilities of another kind of life; they often move about by themselves, no longer attached to their families, and little interested in seeing and visiting them even when near them or migrating with them; they are caring for their own children; they have settled into the curious combination of industry and initiative (needed to keep moving over such distances, to keep working at such back-breaking work) and lethargy and despair (reflected in their faces, their gestures, their way of slow movement, flattened speech, infrequent merrymaking). "We keeps going," said the father of one of the ten families, "but it ain't a good time like we once thought."

Psychopathology

Having discussed some of the features of growth and development as they take place in migrant farm families, I might now mention some of the medical and psychiatric problems particularly evident in these people. I have already noted the high infant mortality rate. From infancy through childhood a host of illnesses, uncorrected deformities, and congenital abnormalities or developmental disorders face the children, and any psychiatric study cannot exclude such facts from a discussion of the sources of migrant psychopathology.

There was striking evidence in the ten families and in my work as a "general practice" physician beside the public health doctors of tooth decay in children; of uncorrected disturbances of vision; of repeated ear infections that have resulted in faulty hearing; of valvular heart diseases, congenital and rheumatic, that are associated with impaired circulation of blood; of continual parasitic diseases that produce diminished appetite, weakness, and anemia; of vitamin deficiencies based on faulty eating habits, many of them from aversions as well as poverty or lack of availability; of chronic diarrheas, chronic fungal diseases of the skin, chronic tuberculosis; of untreated or poorly treated, chronic and recurrent, venereal diseases; of chronic kidney and bladder infections; of muscle pains and bruises or bone injuries or back diseases brought on by working conditions; of nerve palsies.

Such illnesses cannot help but affect the minds of people

regularly suffering from not one but in all likelihood many of them. Fatigue, insomnia, loss of appetite, trouble in breathing or walking, pain, itching, bleeding, blurred or double vision, hardness of hearing—these are some of the symptoms of these diseases, and their psychological effects upon people will be appreciated.

To view the more formally psychiatric disorders seen in migrants, we must see much of their behavior, as with all of us, as an attempt to adapt to (cope with) the particular kind of life which is theirs. There is little sense in taking middle-class social and cultural standards and transposing them to migrant families as measurements of their "normal" or "abnormal" behavior. While it is true that migrants share an American citizenship with us all, their living conditions and habits have a quality all their own.

This said, we can, however, take notice of the breakdown of adjustment in these people, and try to indicate when it seems to happen and why. Migrant children generally start life with strong support from mothers who predominantly breast-feed them for long, unanxious periods over many months, and offer constant affection and tenderness to them. Their toilet training is largely casual, basically unconcerned with time, frequency, or specific place, though gradually firm on the distinction between house (or vehicle) and the "outside." Children learn to get along closely with brothers and sisters, but scrap easily with other children; they are punished quickly but without prolonged residual hostility, and allowed both to be openly affectionate and angry to their parents. They are in contrast taught rigid controls before non-migrants, and fears of them also.

What we see in migrant children, to some extent as a result of this, is a preservation over the generations of a certain soundness of mind, self-confidence and self-esteem in one set of circumstances, in company with a rigid, anxious, fearful way of engaging with another set of circumstances. Thus, there is little to no childhood schizophrenia in migrant children, very few of the temper tantrums and bed-wetting complaints commonly seen in middle-class child guidance clinics. There are few if any specific "learning problems," again so frequently seen in those clinics, because the entire culture of the migrants has a "learning problem" built into its whole way of life, work taking precedence over residence, let alone schooling, and parents, basically tired and illiterate, having no capacity to stimulate a taste for education in their young.

On the whole, these children at five or six seem cheerful,

spontaneous, affectionate to one another, and relaxed, in spite of their frequently poor physical health and the comparatively hard life they and their parents must live. There are positive forces at work in their family life that give them initial psychological strength to face the world.

Bit by bit over time this initial stamina faces challenges and threats. Physical health deteriorates: the first sight of some of the teeth, squinting eyes, infected skin, and bent backs of "young" migrants in their twenties confirms that fact. The tight-knit, isolated protection that migrant living offers children yields to the demand that the child, in his early teens, establish his own livelihood, marriage, and capacity to "keep going" (literally as well as metaphorically).

At this point migrants often develop a variety of "symptoms" or ways of thinking and feeling which indicate their response to the cumulative stresses of their kind of existence. They may drink heavily before or after work, using the cheap wine and beer they can afford to dull their senses in the face of, or in the wake of, their long hours of harvesting. They may become nasty and violent with one another, just as when children they were allowed to be toward neighbors. They often become careless and hurtful toward the homes furnished them by farmers, destroying screen doors, stopping up the central plumbing facilities of a camp. Some may call such behavior "accidental"; but many farmers are correct in sensing the barely submerged hostility and resentment at work in these people.

The migrants don't specifically "intend" to damage property, but are aware of feeling overworked and underpaid, and carry those feelings around with them farily constantly. When, after many months, I hesitantly "interpreted" for several of them a connection between those feelings and their way of *not* caring for property, I met surprise and denials, followed several days later by admissions from two of the five migrants that they did in fact consciously kick doors or walls at times, and thus might well do other similar deeds without even knowing why.

Apathy, gloom, and severe depressions are seen in many migrants, and depressions severe and crippling enough to be considered psychotic. In fact, I have seen seven cases of psychotic behavior recognized as such (though not, of course, so labelled) by migrants and reported by members of the ten families. These cases are people who are called "different," yet they work and are generally tolerated. Rarely, except for criminal reasons, do these people see psychiatrists or even mental hospitals, even when grossly schizophrenic. I

thought two of my 17 adult informants (three of the homes were fatherless and without a continuing husband) psychotic, that is, in comparison with the others, guarded, depressed, hard to follow in thinking, and inappropriate in mood.

Migrants are particularly likely to use such psychological mechanisms as denial, projection, and suppression. They favor conversion reactions (I saw paralyses and seizures which made no neurological sense) and tend to express a good deal of their anxiety or despair in somatic form (and language, too). "My blood is weak" or "my stomach is weary" may express depression and tension but also tell of episodes of real physical illness, such as ulcers, parasitic diseases, or anemias of one sort or another. In this regard, it is hard to evaluate any given complaint from a migrant without taking into consideration his style of life and even reason for expressing a particular complaint at one time or another.

One way of approaching some observations is to hear what others who work closely with migrants feel about them. Growers employ them and are very sensitive to their capacities and behavior. Here are small sections of one long taped interview with a Florida grower, an earnest, hard working, thoughtful, and kind person; similar comments come constantly from other growers, from doctors, nurses, teachers, county agricultural agents, from all whose work brings them close to migrants:

> No matter what we try to do for them, they undo it. We build houses for them, and they destroy them. We fix their screens, and they tear them within the same day. We try to get them to take care of things, you know, where they live, everything from the house to their own belongings, and they don't seem to care . . . If you ask me the real answer to this is massive education of the children, because I know they're not born the way they are, but they sure develop that way as things are now, and you could give them twice their salary and they'd still do what they do now . . . They'd drink it away and waste it on a lot of junk they buy, silly trinkets and unnecessary luxuries if you ask me . . . and then they still wouldn't eat right if they could get as much money as anyone around here; and they wouldn't know how to save it and spend it sensibly the way you and I would . . .
>
> So it's not just money, it's their bringing up . . . and what a lot of people want is for them to change and be more like us . . . Well, if they're going to be more like us I think you'd have to get children right from the beginning and set up good schools for them and teach them real intensively, not just reading and writing, but all the things we learn at home as well as school . . . you know, how to care for yourself and what the world expects of you . . . I mean that you should study and try to get ahead . . . then if they had that kind of education I *do* think they'd grow up different from their parents . . .
>
> Yes, I suppose they wouldn't want to work for us then . . . But if we're trying to make those kinds of changes with them we'd

> probably have to do something about our agriculture, too . . . We won't be needing them anyway the way we used to; it's a matter of time when machines will take it all over, or most of it, and then we could use the better educated ones; and just a few of them compared to what we have now could run a farm if they were intelligent enough . . .
>
> But meanwhile we're caught in the middle. We've got to worry about the market prices and weather and all the overhead we have and we have all the trouble of getting migrant labor and then keeping them steady and productive . . . It's easy to jump on us, but no one helps our vegetable prices the way they do some crops, and we can be wiped out in a season from a freeze or price drop, and when we need labor it's an emergency. Either those fields get harvested right away or they don't. And who's going to do it? . . . Maybe if they helped us with getting equipment to take away the need for so many field hands, and also got going on educating them, we could sooner or later get rid of the whole problem.

Again and again one hears that migrants are unreliable, unkempt, lacking in thrift and tidiness. Worse, they tend to be willfully destructive of property, heavy drinkers, quarrelsome with one another, and generally a discouraging and depressing lot, unresponsive to aid, sullen before advice, ill-suited even for more money or better working and living conditions. And their employers make a sound case, not only for this, but for their own precarious position in our economy.

Such assertions and complaints lodged by many intelligent growers and hard working officials in the fields of migrant health and education are hard to dispute. It is very trying for a dietician to work with a family daily surrounded by citrus fruits yet unwilling to serve them to their children. Potato chips, cokes, perhaps canned and stewed corn, fried fat: "yes" for these. Fresh fruit and vegetables, the very harvest of their hands, are ignored or rejected. Migrants often are suspicious when mobile units come almost to their very door offering nearby free medical diagnosis and treatment. Many migrant families don't want their children to go to school, don't care whether they receive their "shots," and don't, certainly, pay attention to the amenities of property care or civil behavior with one another, to the value of moderation in alcoholic intake, sexual indulgence, and child bearing, to the conventions of marriage and divorce, or to the refinements of budgeted expenditures for sensible, and hopefully useful, "permanent" possessions.

Of practical interest in a discussion of migrant psychopathology is their common refusal to eat oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, cherries—the healthy foods they so desperately need. Even when they hear earnest and effective dieticians correlate in simple, stark language the relationship between their eat-

ing preferences and habits and their own and their children's ailments, many stubbornly refuse to make changes in their diets. Ignorance is surely one part of the explanation, but interviews suggest that another part is a strong aversion to eating what they must live by and work upon. In several cases I saw real revulsion at the mention of eating or serving a tomato or orange, a real kind of fear, as if in some way all the anger they felt at having to harvest those foods for a living would eventually come to haunt them and live in them if they were consumed.

In sum, many migrants seem to have constructed a split in their personalities which results in two distinct personality styles. With their children and husbands or wives they will often be warm, open, and smiling. At work, with strangers, and often with one another while traveling or even walking the streets, they are guarded, suspicious, shrewdly silent, or sullenly calculating in what they do have to say; and sometimes clearly apathetic, humorless or even bitter, resentful, and touchy. Such alterations in mood and attitude appeared to me as grim and striking examples of the capacity of the human mind to respond to its environment and keep itself intact by developing a high order of ability to divide itself severely and categorically. A mother said: "We switches back and forth from being in a good mood to a bad one because you learns how to travel, and you just make your head travel with you, so you gives yourself and the kids a break from the field."

Of course, the problem of *differential behavior in white and Negro migrants* had to be considered. There were definite differences between the six Negro and four white families studied along such variables as promiscuity (higher in Negroes), duration of breast-feeding (longer in Negroes), tendency toward open expression of anger toward one another by word or deed (higher in whites), distance covered in yearly migrations (higher in Negroes), number of children (slightly higher in Negroes).

In the important respects of viewing the infant as a rare and thus specially valuable possession (to be nourished well in the early months), of generally having a "permissive" attitude toward toilet training, of attitude toward education and toward the time their children became adults and toward themselves in contrast to the world, the two sets of families largely resembled one another. Other observers have said that in some cases white mothers are not as warm with their infants, stricter with their children later, and prone to more pervasive depression, including more overt anti-social violence,

when so disposed. (Of course, whites in the South can behave more aggressively "in public" than Negroes, regardless of class or occupation.)

My observations, however, tend to indicate that migrants, including white migrants, have developed certain characteristic attitudes *on the basis of their work and travel habits.* The constant movement, the threat of social chaos, the cramped living and traveling, make for common problems and remarkably similar responses to them which separate to some extent *migrant* behavior from that of the rest of the poor. Migrant farmers once were mostly poor farmers. They still are poor and they still are farmers, but they are also migrants. As such, there is a specific social and cultural condition to their lives, and a specific psychological stress and challenge too. If poor people have their own culture grounded in the life and laws of the slum or the rural village, migrants do not share in it, though they may of course carry some of it with them in what they do possess, a life of mobility that calls forth its own variation of habits and practices, surely more resembling the way poor people than middle-class people live, but different from both.

Still, these people are fellow Americans. They may watch the same television sets; travel in cars similar if older than most; and travel on the public road system, though most of them shun principal roads out of fear, the wish to be alone or with their own kind, the dread of "breaking down on the road and ending up in jail." Their assumptions about everyone from the policeman to the gas station attendant may be different, even, from that of many other poor people, but they *see* those toll roads, gas stations, and signs advertising the host of goods and services we are accustomed to consider part of our way of living in this rich land.

What is the psychological effect of living the migrant life in a land where others seem well able to live a more settled and comfortable one? The drawings of migrant children show that they know such facts and generally tend to judge themselves in some way weaker, blemished, guilty, or at fault for their condition. One four year old girl told me that were her mother's rheumatic heart condition better, they would doubtless live better. A seven year old boy in another family put the blame for his general bad luck on his own poor health, a bone disease affecting his right leg. There is a tendency, thus, to feel not only weak and hard pressed but *responsible* for that fate. Though by such a maneuver of the mind these men, women, and children may achieve a rare feeing of control over their destinies, the price they pay

in largely unrealistic loss of self-respect is rather a significant one.

Particularly unfortunate is such self-accusation when, in point of fact, these migrant families are willing to move about so far and wide, working so hard. Many poor are now called "unemployables," and many others rely upon welfare payments to keep them from hunger until jobs are more plentiful. Migrant farmers try to work, often go far to work. What psychological insistence makes them travel to work, rather than to a city to go on relief, cannot be described by any one generalization. The explanation rests in a combination of such factors as fear of the city, a genuine attachment to the land, a sometime enjoyment of movement, a depression that sets in for many of them when they *do* stop traveling and working, and a fear of that depression.

I must also mention the consistent willingness of migrant farm workers to work under literally any and all conditions, and for wages that hardly compare with any earned by other American citizens. We hear today a good deal of talk that insists upon the need for foreign workers to do "stoop labor." It is claimed that enough of our own people will not do certain hard jobs, picking beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, or cutting celery. I can only say that I have seen these people by the hundreds at work, and heard dozens and dozens of others wish for more work and better pay, but not for *different* work, involving less strenuous effort.

Frankly, it comes as a surprise to many of those who work closely with migrants—ministers, social workers, dieticians, and a few doctors and nurses—to hear that American farmhands, white and Negro, are reluctant to do *any* kind of farm work. The facts are that they always have done whatever farm work was available, and frequently done so for meager pay at that. Anyone who has stood about in the "loading zones" of certain southern towns and watched the crowds of workers assemble at 6 A.M. for the long day's work, including the haul to work and back, will recognize the irony in claims that there are insufficient workers to farm our land. That foreign labor is more "manageable," more susceptible to various regulations and the authority of their employers, is doubtless true. The issue, however, is social and economic, not psychological: the American farmhands I have studied and observed are *motivated* toward work, *want* to work, and *will* work. Other workers may well be preferred by farm owners, but psychiatric observations do not support many of the claims frequently made about the "laziness" of farmhands. On the contrary, most of these people display an

initiative and desire for work in striking contrast to their poor brethren in cities, many of whom are unemployed and on relief, some of whom are unable to work, and some eventually uninterested in looking for any possibility of work. Migrant farm workers, almost by definition, show a remarkable capacity and desire to travel far and wide in search of work.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

On the basis of my observations I would first emphasize the *isolation* that specially characterizes migrant farm life.

In effect, migrant farm workers comprise, by the hundreds of thousands, a vastly ignored sub-culture whose work is essential to our well-stocked tables, but whose lives are often simply not known to most of us. There has, for example, been no psychiatric study of how these people manage such strains as constant movement with its social and cultural disorganization, economic hardship, political disenfranchisement, and the personal and familiar conditions of uprootedness in general.

My own investigation finds that in order to adapt to such unusual facts of environment migrants turn their isolated, mobile life inward, becoming guarded and suspicious toward outsiders but, in compensation for a rootless life, exceptionally close-knit with their young childen. They tend to be unusually warm and stimulating with their infants, and rather lax about disciplining them. They so treat them that there appears to be significantly less hostility among the children; in contrast, hostility and suspicion are channeled toward other families as well as the world in general, which is seen as unfriendly and punitive. Families thus become separated from families, even within the migrant culture, so that the price for cohesion within the family is isolation and alienation from others.

Moreover, migrant children progressively learn a sense of their own weakness and inadequacy in comparison with the rest of the population, whose existence they comprehend and see from the distance of the traveler or television viewer. Their drawings and their play in games as well as their words indicate that they see themselves as smaller, less able to make decisions affecting their own lives, and, for some reason not clearly understood by them, stained, crippled, or paralyzed. For that matter, migrant children do not have the cultural accompaniment to physiological adolescence that we call "youth." They go directly into adulthood, with its work, marriage, and parenthood, in their early teens.

Migrants thus tend not only to be distrustful of others, but even hostile toward many attempts to help them with medicine, shelter, or advice. They tend to avoid the very food they harvest, often in a fearful manner. Perhaps they simply are avoiding reminders of their hard work; perhaps they prefer other food for reasons that stem from their folk-

ways. In any event, vitamin deficiencies and generally inadequate diets result from such behavior.

Migrants develop a variety of medical and psychiatric illnesses. Especially are they susceptible to mood swings, violence toward one another, and heavy drinking. The physical health of these people is generally quite poor, with a host of diseases plaguing their skin, muscles, blood, vital organs, and nervous system from birth to death. These diseases also affect the minds of those so afflicted, causing anxiety, fear, irritability and excitability, withdrawal and moodiness.

There is an urgent need for closer study of the lives of migrant farmers, and the problems in such a study are to some extent indicated. I can only remark upon the extraordinary resilience shown by many of these people. The exertion of will they can muster, under the conditions of life they have as their very own, calls for further psychiatric study into how people manage stress and preserve, as well as lose, some of their psychological stability and human dignity. To say, as some do, domestic migrants will not work at "stoop labor" is to ignore the daily facts of life for hundreds of thousands of native Americans who, in point of fact, *have done* and *continue to do* precisely that: working under all sorts and conditions of work for pay exceedingly low in comparison to that most of us get.

Confronted with such dismaying facts our reaction as middle class citizens, as professionals in medicine or education or government, are understandable if at times self-defeating. We want to "forget" what amounts in sum to a vastly unpleasant and complicated state of affairs. We are made uncomfortable. We don't quite know what to do.

Still, what *are* we to do? I can only say with some special experience that it is indeed possible to get to know and understand these migrant families and their behavior. If we are to approach these people with some of our standards of living and behavior, which they see on television or from the road and know to exist for others if not themselves, we must do so, it seems to me, with patience and willfulness. We must, that is, be prepared for the tiresome work, the coordinated planning, in education, medicine, agriculture, housing, and a host of associated fields, required for the job.

Our tenant farmers and migrant workers will respond to consistent and strong effort exerted their way from the many directions involved in replenishing the needy. Their children can be better taught. Their health can improve. Their water can be safer, their food more nourishing. Eventually their actions can become more constructive and their

spirits higher. Nor need they be enemies of their present employers, many of whom wish them well and are also caught in frustrating situations which are really part of the same social and agricultural problems afflicting the migrants. Whatever we do, then, we should *mean*. A few casual and half-hearted attempts are likely to result in frustration, anger, and, finally, a sense of failure on both sides, theirs and "ours."